

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 DHA-02 OC-05 CCO-00 SY-05

OPR-02 SCCT-01 A-01 SCA-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05 FEA-01 EB-07

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 (ISO) W

----- 051457

O R 261222Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7856

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 15564

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, LE

SUBJ: LEBANON SUFFERING FROM POST-CHRISTMAS BLAHS

REF: BEIRUT 15528 (1148Z)

1. CHRISTMAS EVE, DESPITE CRESCENDO OF INCIDENTS AND PROVOCATIONS IN AFTERNOON AND EVENING, DID NOT RPT NOT TURN INTO "NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES" WHICH PROPHETS OF GLOOM WERE PREDICTING. NEVERTHELESS, AIR OF TENSION AND ANXIETY PERSISTED OVER VERY SUBDUED HOLIDAY AND CONTINUES DEC 26. ARMED MEN OF VARIOUS PERSUASIONS HAVE RETURNED TO MOST OF CAPITAL'S STREETS DURING LAST TWO DAYS AND ARE PRESENT TODAY IN UPRECEDENTED NUMBERS. MUSLIMS AND LEFTISTS ARE EVIDENT IN RAS BEIRUT AND HAMRA AREAS OF WEST BEIRUT. LOCAL SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF DEC 26 THAT MURABITOUN, JUMBLATT'S PSP, PPS, AND NASSERITES FORM BULK OF THESE FORCES. HE REPORTS SIGHTING RPG ROCKETS IN VICINITY OF CONCORDE HOTEL FOR FIRST TIME AND NOTING MILITIAMEN OF NEWLY-FORMED GROUP, THE NAJADAH-CORRECTIVE MOVEMENT, WHICH BROKE AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONALIST MUSLIM NAJADAH PARTY (FORMER PRIMIN RASHID AS SOLH IS ALLEGEDLY ONE OF THE GUIDING LIGHTS OF THIS NEW GROUP).

2. RELATIVELY HEAVY FIGHTING, INCLUDING USE OF MORTARS AND ROCKETS, WAS CLEARLY AUDIBLE IN RAS BEIRUT NIGHT DEC 25-26, TAPERING OFF AT ABOUT 0730 HOURS. FIREFIGHT WAS BETWEEN MUSLIMS/LEFTISTS IN RIAD AS SOLH SQUARE AND PHALANGE NEAR EMPIRE CINEMA. SNIPING REPORTEDLY CONTINUES THERE AS OF 1200 HOURS AND BEIRUT RADIO IS ADVISING CAUTION IN ALL PARTS OF TOWN. OTHER HOTSPOTS OVER NIGHT WERE IN ASHRAFIYEH AND SINN AL FIL, BUT SHIYAH/AIN EL-RUMANNEH SPENT RELATIVELY QUIET NIGHT, WITH ONLY LIGHT WEAPONS FIRE TO DISTURB SERENITY. CONFIDENTIAL

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3. ZAHLE IS CLAM BUT TENSE AS HIGHER COORDINATION COMMITTEE MOVED EN MASSE TO AREA DEC 25 TO BE CLOSE AT HAND AS IT ATTEMPTS TO PUT THE LID ON THAT SITUATION. NEARBY BAALBEK IS QUIET DEC 26, BUT EFFERVESCENT TOWNSPEOPLE STORMED AND BURNED GOVT BUILDING TWO DAYS AGO, RELEASING AN ESTIMATED 60 PRISONERS FRO JAIL. THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN

SUPPORTERS OF PRIMIN KARAME AND PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS IN TRIPOLI HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN RESOLVED, BUT KARAME MET WITH 'ARAFAT FOR TWO HOURS DEC 25. WE ARE INFORMED THAT THE SITUATION IN TRIPOLI WAS THE CENTERPIECE OF THIS CONVERSATION AND THAT 'ARAFAT LATER SEND WORD TO PLO AUTHORITIES IN THE NORTHERN CITY TO BACK OFF FOR THE MOMENT.

4. CABINET MET DEC 24 WITH PRIMIN KARAME AND PRES FRANGIE HUDDLING TOGETHER IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO SEESION.FRANGIE HAD SOME KIND WORDS TO SAY ABOUT THE SYRIANS, LEADING SOME OBSERVERS TO CONCLUDE THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO LINE REGARDING SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS. WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REPORTS THAT FRANGIE WILL VISIT DAMASCUS SHORTLY ALTHOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY DID NOT GET IN ON THE VISIT OF KING KHALED. SAME SOURCES BELIEVE THAT SYRIANS WILL BECOME MUCH MORE ACTIVE IN SEEKING RESOLVE LEBANESE SITUATION ONCE HOLIDAYS, INCLUDING MUSLIM NEW YEAR ON JAN 2 ARE OVER.
GODLEY

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